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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 004146

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI MCNS DISCUSSES REFERENDUM SECURITY, OTHER ISSUES

REF: A. BAGHDAD 4110

[B](#). BAGHDAD 4109

[C](#). AMMAN 7997

[D](#). RIYADH 7047

[E](#). ABU DHABI 4200

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (a), (b), (d).

[1](#). (S//REL GBR AUS) SUMMARY: The Iraqi Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS) met on October 4, 2005 to discuss the conditions for the transfer of security responsibilities, to review security plans for the October 15 referendum, and to discuss other issues. The Committee's discussion regarding the transfer of security responsibilities is the subject of septel. On referendum security, the Ministry of Interior's (MOI) referendum security plan was presented and discussed. In addition, Ambassador Khalilzad provided a readout of his trip to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the UAE. Coalition concerns about the lack of Iraqi action on Tal Afar reconstruction and reconciliation plans were flagged yet again, as were coalition concerns about recent confrontations at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) between Ministry of Transportation security forces and Global Security contractors. The Prime Minister also mentioned his desire to reopen a bridge in Musayyia closed to civilian traffic. Lastly, the Prime Minister noted that security in Latifiya is becoming a concern and asked if MNF-I can examine the situation and take action.

[2](#). (S//REL GBR AUS) The MCNS met at the home of Prime Minister Jaafari the night of October 4, 2005. Present were the Prime Minister, Minister of Defense Saadoun al-Dulime, Minister of Interior Bayan Jabr, National Security Advisor Mowaffak al-Rubaie, Presidential Spokesman Laith Kubba, Ambassador Khalilzad, MNF-I Commanding General Casey, British Charge d'Affaires Tim Torlot, and MNF-I Deputy Commanding General Brims. A translator and note-takers also were in attendance. Minister of State for National Security Affairs Kareem al-Anzi was absent.

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REFERENDUM SECURITY  
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[3](#). (S//REL GBR AUS) MOI General Ayden Khidir briefed the Committee on security plans for the October 15 referendum. He stressed that all the involved ministries had participated in formulating the plan, which defines the roles of all parties and provides security for ballots and polling places throughout the process. The security plan for polling sites consists of three rings.

-- The inner ring will be manned by Iraqi police who will be positioned at each polling site.

-- The second ring will consist of Iraqi Army forces, who will be positioned further out and will control access to the polling sites. Their exact positioning will depend on local conditions.

-- The third and outer most ring will consist of MNF quick reaction forces who will be out of sight but close enough to respond if needed.

All forces involved will take up their positions on October 13 and will remain until the polling sites are closed and the ballot boxes removed. All of the MOI's departments and forces will be mobilized for this effort. The plan has been coordinated with the Ministries of Transport, Commerce, Trade, and Health; and its execution will involve elements of these ministries.

[4](#). (S//REL GBR AUS) The most important part of the plan, according to General Ayden, is the set of emergency measures that will be enacted. They are the following:

-- HOLIDAY: A national holiday will be declared from Thursday, October 13 through Sunday, October 16 -- this will help control and minimize the movement of people.

-- CURFEW: A national curfew will be imposed from October 13 until October 17 prohibiting movement between the hours of 2200 and 0700.

-- POLLING HOURS: The polls will be open on October 15 at 0700 and will close at 1700.

-- WEAPONS BAN: No weapons will be permitted except those of authorized security personnel between October 13 and October 16.

-- BORDERS CLOSED: All national borders and airports will be closed from the morning of October 14 until 0800 on October 16.

-- PROVINCES CLOSED: All provincial borders will be sealed between 1800 on October 14 until 0600 on October 16 for security and political reasons (i.e., to prevent the transport of car bombs and groups from disrupting the vote or intimidating voters or election workers).

-- TRAFFIC BAN: All vehicular traffic will be prohibited on October 15, except for vehicles bearing specially prepared placards issued by the MOI.

Some of these procedures will not be made public until the very last moment in order to prevent tipping off the insurgents as to the government's plans. It was agreed that some of the measures should be announced earlier than others to allow the public time to plan how to get to their polling sites on referendum day.

15. (S//REL GBR AUS) Other issues include:

-- PRESS COVERAGE: Regularly accredited journalists will be allowed to visit any polling site. Those who wish to carry cameras or other equipment will be allowed to visit 50 designated polling sites but will have to possess a specially issued pass distributed by the MOI. Six polling sites will be set up with live satellite feeds to permit day-long coverage (two sites in each Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Basrah).

-- ANBAR PROVINCE: There is a question of whether tribesmen in Anbar will be allowed to provide security at polling places. It seems the best solution is to post only a small number at each site and then only under the direct supervision of Iraqi security forces. The tribes would then get to play a role but be under control (and thus less likely to cause problems). Minister of Defense Dulime, who has strong ties to Anbar Province, said he recently had met with tribal leaders who had told him the tribes will vote in large numbers, even in areas where military operations are in progress.

-- KIRKUK: In Kirkuk the number of registered voters doesn't add up. In some areas there are many more registered voters than residents. In other areas, the problem is the opposite: only a very few number of registered voters in a substantial population. (Reftel A.) During the last election, large population movements created a problem in this area, and this could become a problem again.

-- ISF and DETAINEE VOTING: Another issue is whether Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) members and detainees will be allowed to vote. In the case of ISF, soldiers manning polling sites will be allowed to vote, and their ballots will be counted with those of their home province. ISF in barracks cannot vote because it is illegal for polling sites to be located on military bases. Plans are being made to permit detainees to vote. MNF can facilitate voting by detainees in their custody, but if they vote, so too must detainees in MOI, MOD, and Ministry of Justice custody. MNF will follow whatever instructions the Iraqis give concerning whether MNF detainees will be permitted to vote.

-- FUNDING: So far, all preparation has been done without a budget. The Prime Minister said that foreign donors need to be pressed to fulfill their obligations.

16. (S//REL GBR AUS) The Ambassador raised concerns about the potential intimidation of Shia and Kurdish voters by Sunni extremists who will try to minimize the number of "yes" votes cast, particularly in Diyala and Salah ad Din provinces. This was the reason cited by Shia leaders for the TNA's attempt to alter the rules on how referendum votes will be counted. (Reftel B.) Minister of Interior Jabr said that these concerns are real and that plans should be made to deploy additional security forces to sensitive areas in order to deter and prevent voter intimidation acts.

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AMBASSADOR'S REGIONAL TRIP  
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17. (S//REL GBR AUS) The Ambassador provided a readout of his recent trip to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the UAE. (Reftels C, D, E.) He said the trip was successful in that he had been well received in all the capitals he visited. He urged each of the governments to engage Iraq on a bilateral

basis at all levels, encouraged them to take steps to control the messages their media outlets are disseminating about Iraq, and asked them to seriously consider what can be done to be of immediate economic assistance to Iraq (such as contributing to reconstruction efforts or publicly announcing debt forgiveness measures). The Ambassador urged the Iraqis to participate in bilateral visits and to give highest priority to sending the Minister of Finance to other states to broach debt issues. The Ambassador stressed it is important for visits to take place to clear up misperceptions about what is happening inside Iraq. Jabr reported that he has already seen evidence that the Ambassador's trip is having positive effects. He visited Jordan after the Ambassador and was told by the King that he plans to visit Baghdad and urge the Iraqi Sunni Arabs living in Jordan to participate in the political process.

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TAL AFAR ISSUES  
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18. (S//REL GBR AUS) The Ambassador, GEN Casey, and LtGen Brims all stressed again the need for the Iraqi government to keep its commitments to the people of Tal Afar by commencing to pay compensation and starting work on reconstruction projects. The combat operations ended three weeks ago, and still the Iraqis have not spent a dollar in Tal Afar. Since the Iraqis have a good plan and have said that \$50 million has been allocated, why is there a delay? After some uncomfortable back and forth among themselves, the Iraqi participants said the Minister of Finance is trying to "find the right mechanism" to make the funds available. GEN Casey pointed out that U.S. forces have paid \$850,000 in compensation and have committed over \$10 million to reconstruction projects, many of which have already begun. The Ambassador stressed that continued Iraqi foot-dragging on this matter sets a bad example for the people and is not acceptable.

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AIRPORT SECURITY  
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19. (S//REL GBR AUS) The Ambassador raised the latest security problem at the Baghdad International Airport. The private security firm Global is still responsible for security at the airport, but recently 25 trucks carrying over 100 Ministry of Transport security officers attempted to enter the airport without advance notice. He warned that this type of action easily could lead to a misunderstanding that could result in violence. This cannot be tolerated. He asked that the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior work with the Minister of Transport to make sure this doesn't happen again.

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IRAQI CONCERNS  
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110. (S//REL GBR AUS) Jaafari raised two concerns regarding security. He reported that security in Latifiya is deteriorating and asked that MNF examine this and respond accordingly. He also requested that the "new" bridge at Musayyia be opened to civilian traffic. Since civilians are restricted to the older bridge, there is great fear in the area that another bridge tragedy like the one that took place in Baghdad will occur. GEN Casey said he would look into the matter.

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